

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7214

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 2169

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EATD, EFIS, CS, MX, EFIN

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CONFLICT BETWEEN PROPOSED IDB FISHERIES

LOAN AND TUNA CONSERVATION

REF: (A) STATE 190034

(B) SAN JOSE 3488, OCT 1, 1973

1. SUMMARY: THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK HAS EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN THAT THE USG WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DELETION OF THAT PORTION OF A PROPOSED IDB FISHERIES LOAN TO COSTA RICA WHICH DEALT WITH EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL TUNA FLEET. THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT PRESIDENT ODUBER WAS PERSONALLY INTERESTED AND THAT SUCH ACTION COULD LEAD TO A CHANGE IN COSTA RICA'S TRADITIONALLY COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD TUNA CONSERVATION MEASURES.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: (1) THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THE MINISTER AND TO PRESIDENT ODUBER, IF ASKED.

SPECIFICALLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, THE USG PLAYED IN DELETING THE PROVISIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE TUNA
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FLEET FROM THE PROPOSED LOAN. (2) THE EMBASSY WOULD ALSO BE

INTERESTED IN LEARNING WHETHER THE TUNA FISHERIES SECTION OF THE PROPOSED IDB LOAN TO MEXICO HAS ALSO BEEN DELETED.

(3) IN RELATION TO THE MAY 29 IATTC MEETING, CAN THE DEPARTMENT CONFIRM WHETHER AMBASSADOR LOPEZ ATTENDED? IF SO, WAS THE QUESTION OF THE IDB LOAN RAISED?

3. DURING COURTESY CALL BY CHARGE ON MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK HERNAN GARRON, MINISTER RAISED CANCELLATION OF PROVISION OF PROPOSED IDB FISHERIES LOAN DESIGNED TO BUILD UP TUNA FLEET IN PUNTARENAS. HE IMPLIED THAT LOAN WAS CANCELLED DUE TO PRESSURES ARISING IN SENATE. THE MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT COSTA RICA HAS BEEN SUPPORTER OF TUNA CONSERVATION ACCORD AND STATED THAT COUNTRY HAS ONLY EXPORTED 1,500 TONS AGAINST QUOTA OF 6,000 TONS. HE IMPLIED THAT WITHOUT IDB ASSISTANCE, COSTA RICA WILL HAVE TO LOOK TO EUROPE (HE CITED SEVERAL EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN LIST OF POSSIBILITIES) FOR FINANCING AND THAT CANCELLATION OF PROVISION DUE TO OFFICIAL U.S. PRESSURE COULD CHANGE COSTA RICA POSITION ON THE TUNA CONSERVATION ACCORD. HE MENTIONED THAT COSTA RICAN AMBASSADOR HAD ATTENDED THE MAY 29 IATTC WASHINGTON MEETING ON ENFORCEMENT OF TUNA PROTECTION MEASURES. GARRON SAID ODUBER WAS PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN THE MATTER.

4. CHARGE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY OFFICIAL U.S. PRESSURES TO CANCEL TUNA FLEET PORTION OF IDB LOAN AND PROMISED MINISTER THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT AND PROVIDE HIM WITH A MORE COMPLETE BACKGROUND.

5. COMMENT: THE MINISTER'S INDICATION THAT CANCELLATION OF THE PORTION OF THE IDB FISHERIES LOAN DEALING WITH TUNA FISHING MIGHT AFFECT COSTA RICA'S TRADITIONALLY COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD CONSERVATION MEASURES IS OF CONCERN. GARRON'S REMARKS TEND TO SUBSTANTIATE REMARKS MADE EARLY THIS WEEK BY A MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MAG) OFFICIAL TO AN EMBOFF. THIS OFFICIAL STATED THAT HE HAD OVERHEARD A CONVERSATION BETWEEN HIGH LEVEL MAG OFFICIALS LAST WEEK TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY SAW NO REASON WHY COSTA RICA SHOULD COOPERATE WITH THE USG IN IATTC WHEN THE USG HAD VETOED THEIR TUNA FISHERIES LOAN. THIS CONVERSATION WOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE EMBASSY WAS URGING THE GOCR TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MAY 29 IATTC MEETING.

6. IN REACTION TO THIS CONVERSATION AN EMBOFF CONTACTED THE IDB OFFICE IN SAN JOSE AND ASKED ABOUT THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE FISHERIES LOAN. EMBOFF WAS INFORMED THAT IDB SAN JOSE HAD SUBMITTED ITS FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE LOAN THE PREVIOUS WEEK, I.E., AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME THAT THE ALLEGED CONVERSATION BETWEEN HIGH LEVEL MAG OFFICIALS OCCURRED. ACCORDING TO IDB

SAN JOSE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHANGES AGREED UPON BETWEEN IDB HEADQUARTERS AND THE SAN JOSE REPRESENTATIVE WAS THAT THE LOAN WOULD BE REVISED TO DELETE THE SECTION DEALING WITH THE TUNA FISHERY.

7. EMBASSY WAS UNAWARE THAT THIS ACTION WAS BEING CONTEMPLATED. THE ONLY PREVIOUS INDICATION WE HAD OF A POSSIBLE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE IDB LOAN AND TUNA CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS WVA WHEN WE WERE REQUESTED TO COMMENT ON A SIMILAR IDB LOAN BEING PROPOSED FOR MEXICO WHICH INCLUDED A PROVISION FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MEXICAN TUNA FLEET. (SEE STATE 190084 AND SAN JOSE 3488 OF OCTOBER 1, 1973.) AT THAT TIME THE EMBASSY COMMENTED THAT WHILE COSTA RICA WOULD PROBABLY VIEW WITH CONCERN ANY MOVE WHICH MIGHT UNDERMINE TUNA CONSERVATION MEASURES, DEVELOPMENTAL PRIORITIES CLEARLY TOOK PRECEDENCE OVER CONSERVATION IN GOCR DEALINGS WITH THE IFIS; AND, SINCE THE GOCR WAS CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING ITS OWN FISHERIES LOAN WITH THE IDB, THE GOCR WAS PROBABLY NOT VERY INTERESTED IN PLACING LIMITATIONS ON THE MEXICAN LOAN AS THIS MIGHT SET A PRECEDENT FOR THEIR OWN LOAN.

8. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE EMBASSY'S EFFORTS TO HAVE A DELEGATION SENT FROM COSTA RICA TO ATTEND THE IATTC MEETING PROVED FRUITLESS. WE WERE LED TO BELIEVE AT THE TIME THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO ORGANIZE A DELEGATION AT THAT POINT ONLY BECAUSE OF BUREAUCRATIC AND BUDGETARY REASONS CAUSED BY THE RECENT CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT HERE (SEE SAN JOSE 2016). IN A LAST MINUTE EFFORT THE EMBASSY CONTACTED VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AND IATTC COMMISSIONER CARDONA COOPER AT THE FONMIN. CARDONA COOPER AGREED TO INSTRUCT SOMEONE IN WASHINGTON TO ATTEND THE MEETING.
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